

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BERN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3588

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERN 5498

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SZ GR

SUBJ: VISIT TO GREECE OF SWISS FOREIGN MINISTER PIERRE GRABER

1. FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF GRABER VISIT TO GREECE WAS GIVEN
US BY FRANCOIS NORDMANN, FEDERAL POLITICAL DEPT, WHO
ACCOMPANIED GARBER.

2. SWISS FOUND VISIT QUITE USEFUL IN THAT THEY HAVE
CLEARER PICTURE OF GREEK VIEWS ON EC ENTRY, COUNCIL OF
EUROPE AEGEAN AND CYPRUS PROBLEMS AND OTHER ISSUES.

3. SWISS INVITATION TO CARAMANLIS TO RETURN VISIT BALANCES
INVITATION TO TURKEY. TURKISH VISIT WILL TAKE PLACE IN
MARCH, PRIOR TO CARAMANLIS VISIT.

4. ON COUNCIL OF EUROPE, OVER WHICH GREEKS IN PERSON FOREIGN
MINISTER BITSIOS WILL PRESIDE NEXT, GRABER AND BITSIOS AGREED
TO TRY TO INCREASE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE COUNCIL ROLE, IN
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PART BY LIMITING AGENDA FOR MINISTERIAL-LEVEL MEETINGS

TO SUBJECTS OF REAL POLITICAL IMPORTANCE.

5. SWISS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT IMPACT ON SWISS EXPORTS TO GREECE AS GREEK TARIFFS ON EC IMPORTS ARE REDUCED. SWISS HAVE SUFFERED LOSSES IN SPAIN, AND THE SECGGEN OF EFTA WAS ASKED TO TAKE SOUNDINGS IN BRUSSELS, MADRID AND ATHENS ON POSSIBILITY PARALLEL REDUCTIONS FOR EFTA COUNTRIES. GREEKS TOLD GRABER THAT MOTIVATION FOR EC ENTRY POLITICAL, AND THAT THEY WOULD NEGOTIATE IN BRUSSELS FIRST, THEN, IN COMPANY WITH EC, WITH NON-MEMBERS. GREEKS SAID THEY ARE CONCERNED ABOUT SIZEABLE CONTINUING TRADE SURPLUS IN SWITZERLAND'S FAVOR, AND ASKED FOR IMPROVED ACCESS TO SWISS MARKET FOR GREEK EXPORTS, ESPECIALLY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS INCLUDING WINE. SWISS RESPONSE WAS THAT GREEKS SHOULD MAKE GREATER EFFORT DEVELOP A MARKET IN SWITZERLAND, SIMILAR TO THE EFFORT THEY ARE MAKING IN GERMANY.

6. SWISS WERE GIVEN THOROUGH BRIEFING ON AEGEAN AND CYPRUS PROBLEMS. CARAMANLIS STATED THAT GREEKS WERE PREPARED MAKE CONCESSIONS, BUT DUE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION IN TURKEY, TURKS ARE NOT ABLE TO MAKE MEANINGFUL COUNTER-CONCESSIONS. SOURCE CAME AWAY WITH IMPRESSION GREEKS VERY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT PROSPECTS AIR SPACE DISCUSSIONS, BUT HOPEFUL THAT RESULTS BERN TALKS ON CONTINENTAL SHELF WOULD MEAN A RELATIVELY QUIET PERIOD, AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER TURKISH ELECTIONS.

7. BALKAN CONFERENCE. GREEKS TOLD SWISS THAT RUMANIANS, UNDER PRESSURE FROM MOSCOW, ARE RELUCTANT TO DO ANYTHING WITH LONG LIST OF TECHNICAL ITEMS DRAWN UP FOR DISCUSSION, AND THAT TURKEY AND GREECE NOT ANXIOUS TO MOVE EITHER. WHILE NONE OF THE COUNTRIES INVOLVED WANTS TO CALL OFF THIS REGIONAL EFFORT, GREEKS THOUGHT NOTHING WILL HAPPEN FOR SOME TIME TO COME.

8. SWISS TOLD GREEKS THAT THEY BELIEVE BREZNEV VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA WAS DIFFICULT, AND THAT SOVS TOOK A HARD LINE.

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9. ON BILATERAL ISSUES, SWISS WERE ABLE TO MAKE SOME PROGRESS ON TAX PROBLEMS AFFECTING NESTLE AND AT LEAST ONE OTHER SWISS COMPANY IN GREECE.
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